

January 22, 1968

Dear Hal:

Where to start?

Rye appears to be a dupe or operative or marginal nut of sorts; it's good you spotted his action on your own -- Garrison's people knew right off the bat. Had you have had the kind of communication with New Orleans that I assumed existed, then you would have been alerted post haste. As Harv may have told you already, my conclusions are those of Garrison, that this was planted distraction of dubious motive. The so-called bar "Incident" was calculated on my part and witnessed by Verb for confirmation; more on this when you get out here.

The cab details are in Verb's possession, which he will convey at his pleasure; the only thing I can add is that a subsequent woman passenger called Belli after he made the statement on KNEW, confirming the cabbie's story, which he had related to her on a return trip from SF Airport.

On the Unruh letter: Knowing Jess, he will never allow you within 20 miles; perhaps I will be luckier. Whatever dialogue that might have been possible went out the window with the first sentence of the third paragraph. If he read beyond that point it will only be because he has masochistic tendencies.

I am aware your frustration grows by the hour, which does grow late; the abuses being wrought against you are enormous, but they cannot be countered legally or tactically at this juncture without splitting the cause into frictional factions; I know you don't want this to happen, certainly don't want to be the initiator; Verb tells me that the Los Angeles "buff set" is at one another's throats, which is a sad state of affairs; THE most qualified man cannot get embroiled in the likes.

If Garrison's plans cannot afford your expenses, they are in very bad shape indeed.

Write Steve Burton a note and tell him to contact my brother-in-law on the campus; I will alert Kurt to do likewise; they can thus start a student-faculty planning session for the projected critique or forum. I'm sorry I couldn't meet the kid when he was up here, but our schedules conflicted all along the line.

That Hinckle letter is another classic. Knowing Warren he really did enjoy it; his legal advisors, however, will find it not too hilarious when they must answer for his folly. I have not read the chiding article; bring it out with you.

This thing about "public domain" material is going to be one of considerable complexity when the time comes to force recompense; aside from per se pilferages, the paramount

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factors will be to prove access, exposure, and misrepresentations; this latter factor is what you seek to gather now - and I agree.

Please remember that many (most?) of those who would (have)(use) your hard sought expertise do so with the encouragement of publishers and editors; who know not (care not) the propriety of source; this alleviates any academic or professional twinges of conscience that might creep toward their respective bedsteads in midnight.

Verb and I will fill your appearance commitments as best possible; certainly we will co-ordinate this time. I'm going to get KGO's line-up of appearances down pat first, then we can fill in the remainder. The reason I inquired about "the tab" was because the ITT merger blowup has placed ABC in terrible shape; the "austerity program" has been swift and deep out here, with project curtailments and staff reductions. This I know because of admonishments by the people I'm discussing the TV bit with.

I am going to arrange a private dinner party for you during your stay, during which you will have the opportunity to make or break ALFIE's intended goals, i.e. the final publishing/marketing of your unfinished works and the republishing of a hardcover set. The reason I place the onus of coup de grace on good old Harold Weisberg is because he is "What's it all about, Alfie?" -- as the hit tune goes. It will be an enjoyable affair, attended by people who (will) have read considerable on the subject, mostly from your works.

I will write Wes Bowen today and let him take the initiative, if he chooses; I will give him your new phone number and let him make contact.

The Sparrow bit is like Ainesworth, Phelan, and the rest; calculated distraction at best; if the letter helped exercise your sore shoulder, so much for therapy; if you think they'll print it, so much for delusion. TIME has marched on -- into the institution it best represents: American Fiction.

I must admonish you that the suspicion of LBJ's pre and/or post knowledge is most strong out here, especially amongst those who have taken the time to contemplate the weight of evidence against the Warren Commission's conclusions and his refusal to act in re-opening the matter; Garrison's Rampart's cover statement is sinking in; to openly declare Garrison's statement(s) as heretic or irresponsible is to bite your own butt; to not entirely endorse or embellish would be prudent.

Send or bring along another half dozen sets of the private editions; my best to Lil, will talk to or see you soon.

Best Personal Regards,

John